MARVEL

1

WHAT IF? MAGIK BECAME SORCERER SUPREME

WILLIAMS
ANDRADE
O'HALLORAN

RATED T+

AS A CHILD, ILLYANA RASPUTIN WAS TRANSPORTED TO A HELL DIMENSION CALLED LIMBO. ITS RULER, BELASCO, TRAPPED HER THERE FOR SEVEN YEARS. ILLYANA WAS EVENTUALLY ABLE TO OVERCOME BELASCO AND ESCAPE FROM LIMBO—BUT WHEN SHE EMERGED, ONLY SECONDS HAD PASSED ON EARTH.

AS A TEENAGER RAISED IN HELL, ILLYANA STRUGGLED TO READJUST, FINDING HERSELF HUNTED BY THE PAST...BY THE UNKNOWN OUTER LIMITS OF HER POWERS...BY THE FEAR THAT BELASCO WOULD RETURN.

WHAT IF THIS FEAR HAD DRIVEN HER—AWAY FROM HER FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND THE NEW MUTANTS? WHAT IF ILLYANA...WALKED AWAY?

WHO WOULD SHE BECOME?

WHAT IF? MAGIK

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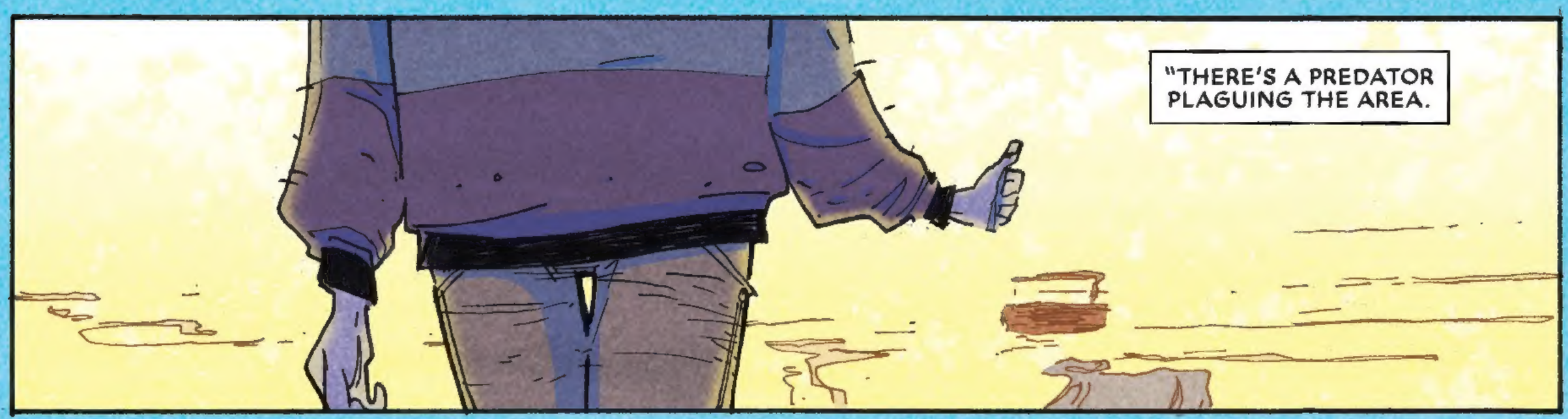
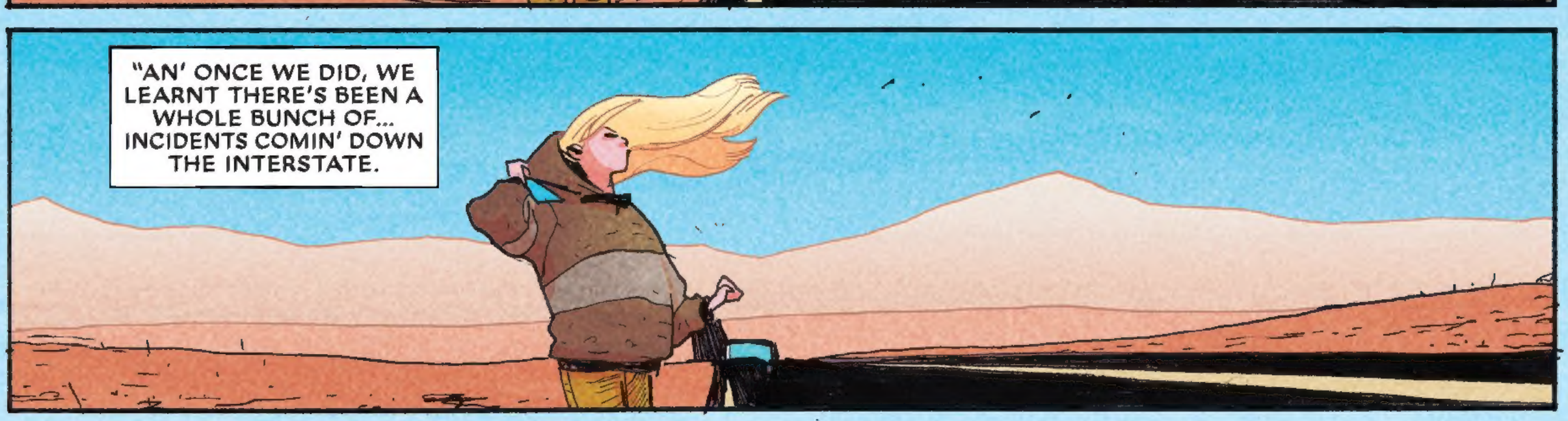
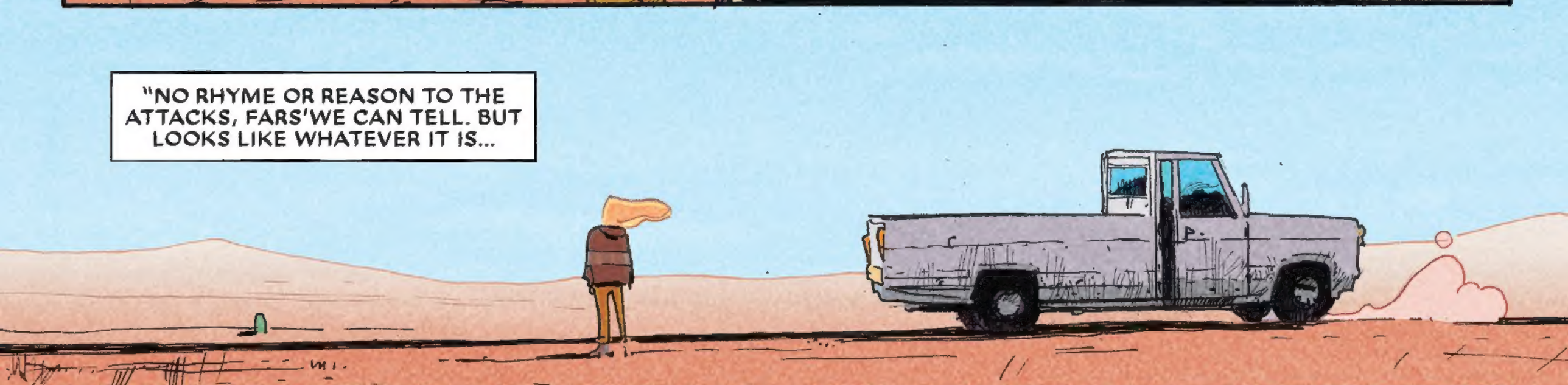
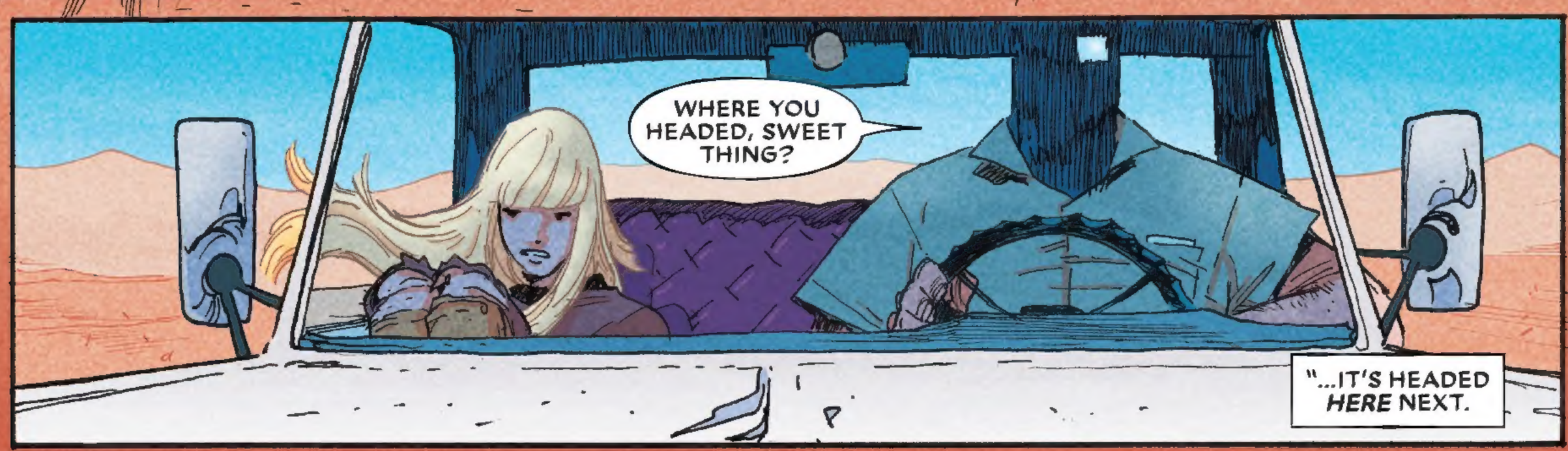

"THERE'S A PREDATOR PLAGUING THE AREA.

"SOME KINDA MAGICAL *MENACE.*

"COVEN UP IN CHATTANOOGA SAYS SOMETHIN' HIT THEM FEW WEEKS BACK AND, WELL, MAGIC FOLKS 'ROUND THESE PARTS CAN *TALK*--
÷SIGH÷


"AN' ONCE WE DID, WE LEARNT THERE'S BEEN A WHOLE BUNCH OF... INCIDENTS COMIN' DOWN THE INTERSTATE.


"NO RHYME OR REASON TO THE ATTACKS, FARS'WE CAN TELL. BUT LOOKS LIKE WHATEVER IT IS...


WHERE YOU HEADED, SWEET THING?
"...IT'S HEADED *HERE* NEXT.

"I JUS' DIDN'T KNOW WHO ELSE TO ASK FOR HELP. I'M SORRY FOR MAKIN' YOU COME ALL THIS WAY, *DOCTOR STRANGE.*"

"NO, PLEASE--I'M GLAD YOU CONTACTED ME. I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING THE SORCERY TRAIL OF THE SAME MARAUDER SINCE IT BEGAN OUT OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK.

PRESIDEN HOTEL

AW, COME ON NOW, WHY YOU *RUNNIN'!*

"NOW THANKS TO YOU, I FINALLY HAVE AN IDEA OF WHERE TO APPREHEND THEM BEFORE THEY STRIKE NEXT."

THIS HOW YOU THANK ME FOR GIVING YOU A LIFT?!

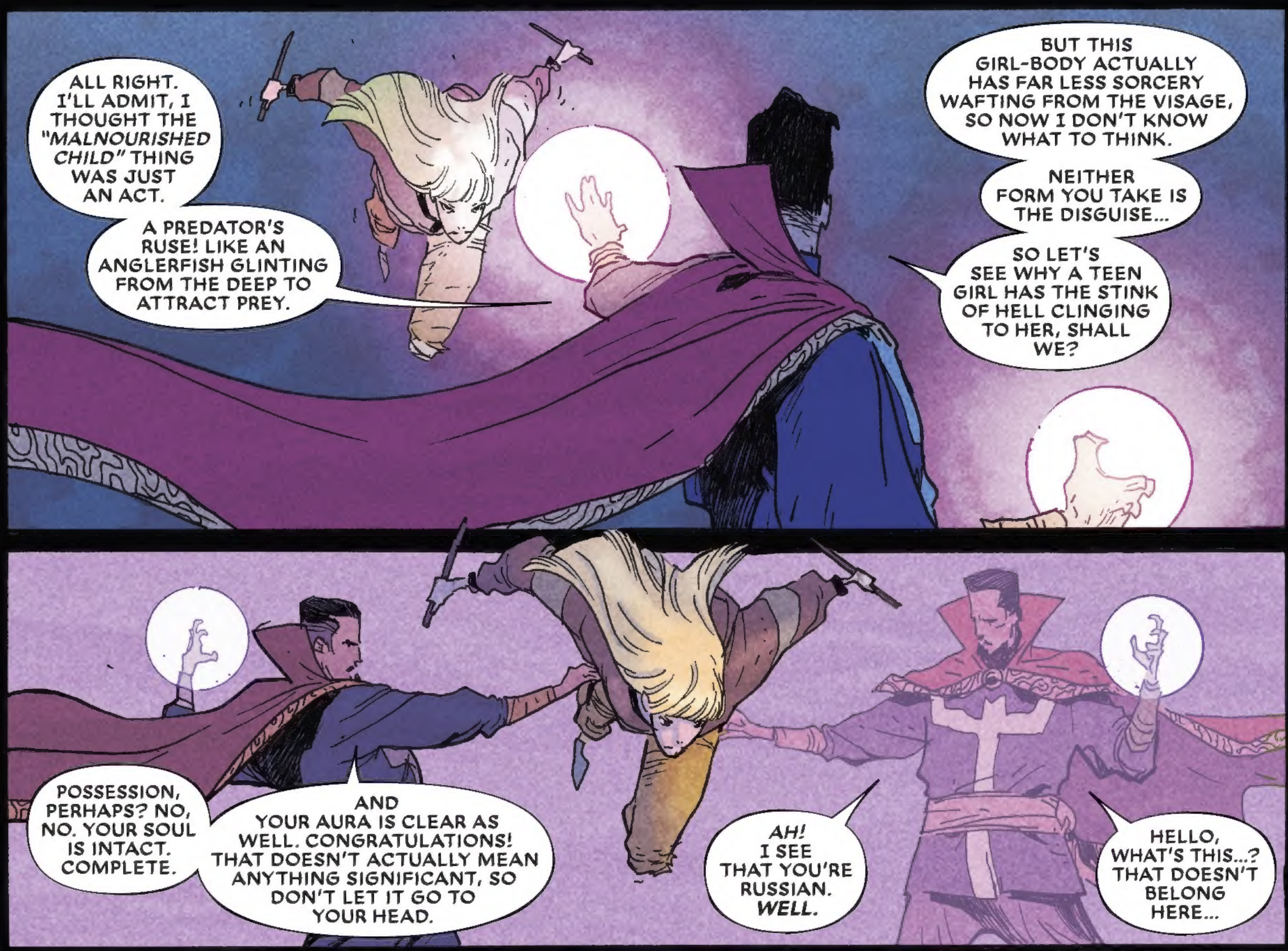
I JUS' WANNA HAVE A LITTLE *FUN,* THAT'S ALL...

SHHH. DON'T BE AFRAID...

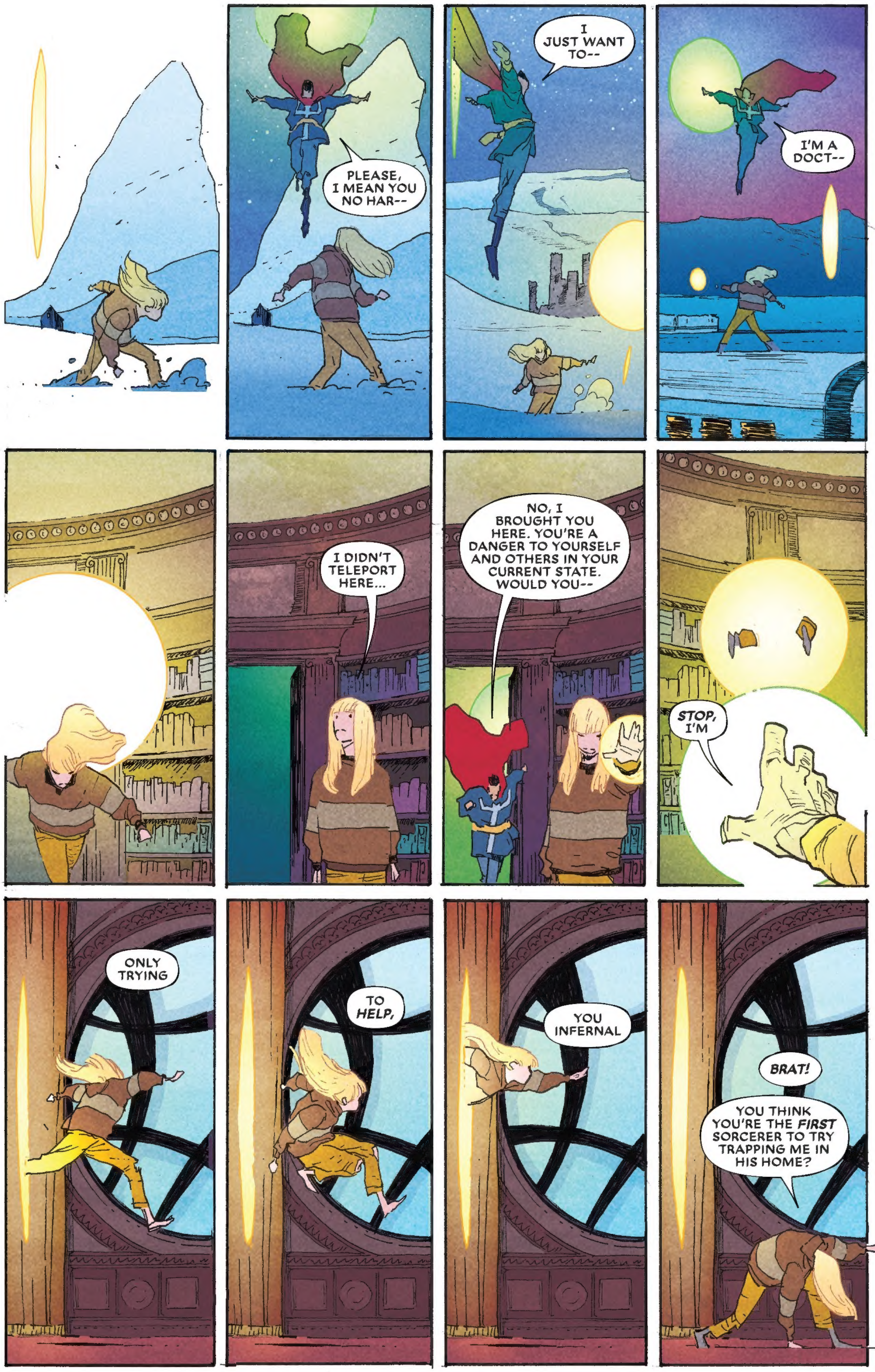
I'M NOT GONNA HURTCHA.

CRACK
THWAK
FWUMP
I CAME OF AGE IN A PLACE WHERE WE CUT EACH OTHER FOR FUN.
MY NAME IS ILLYANA RASPUTIN. I AM 15 YEARS OLD.
I GREW UP IN HELL.
I AM AFRAID OF NOTHING BUT MYSELF.
THAT IS ENOUGH!

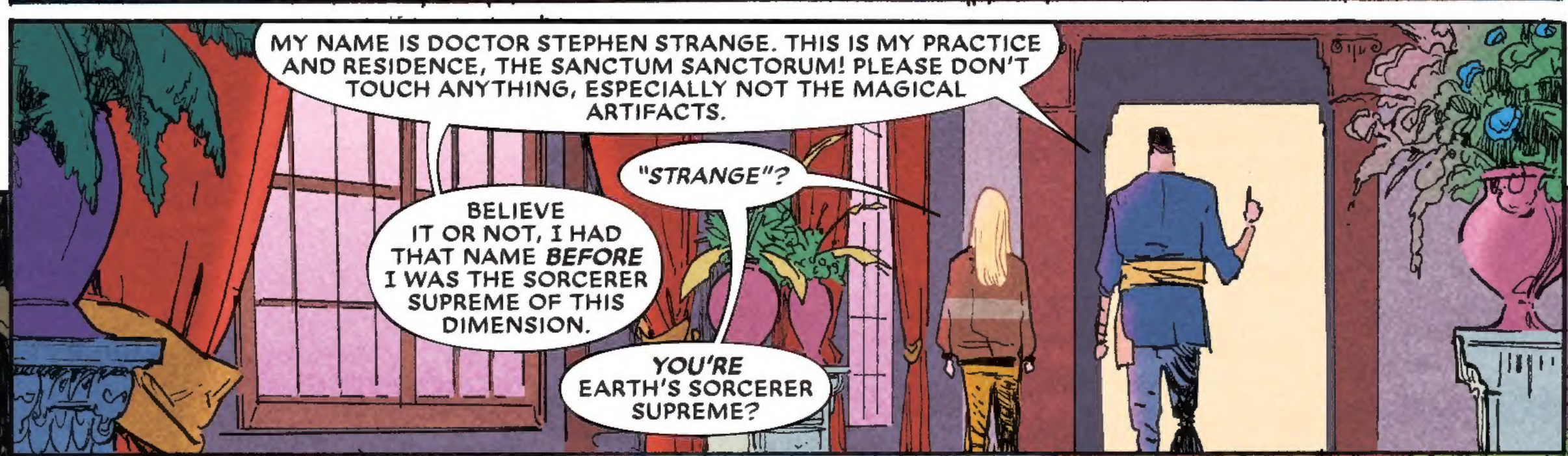
I'LL ADMIT THIS ONE PROBABLY HAD IT COMING, BUT YOUR REDNECK REIGN OF TERROR STILL ENDS TONIGHT, CREATURE.
I'VE FOLLOWED THE STENCH OF YOUR CRUDE SORCERY FOR OVER 1,000 MILES. NOW, I--
I LIKE YOUR BIG AX.
THANK YOU. NOW, I DON'T KNOW *WHY* YOU'VE BEEN TERRORIZING THE LOCAL YOKELS ALONG ALL I-20--
--BUT YOU'VE CERTAINLY LEFT QUITE AN IMPRESSION!
CRNCH
I WASN'T *TERRORIZING* ANYBODY...
...I'VE BEEN *DEFENDING* MYSELF.
STOP!

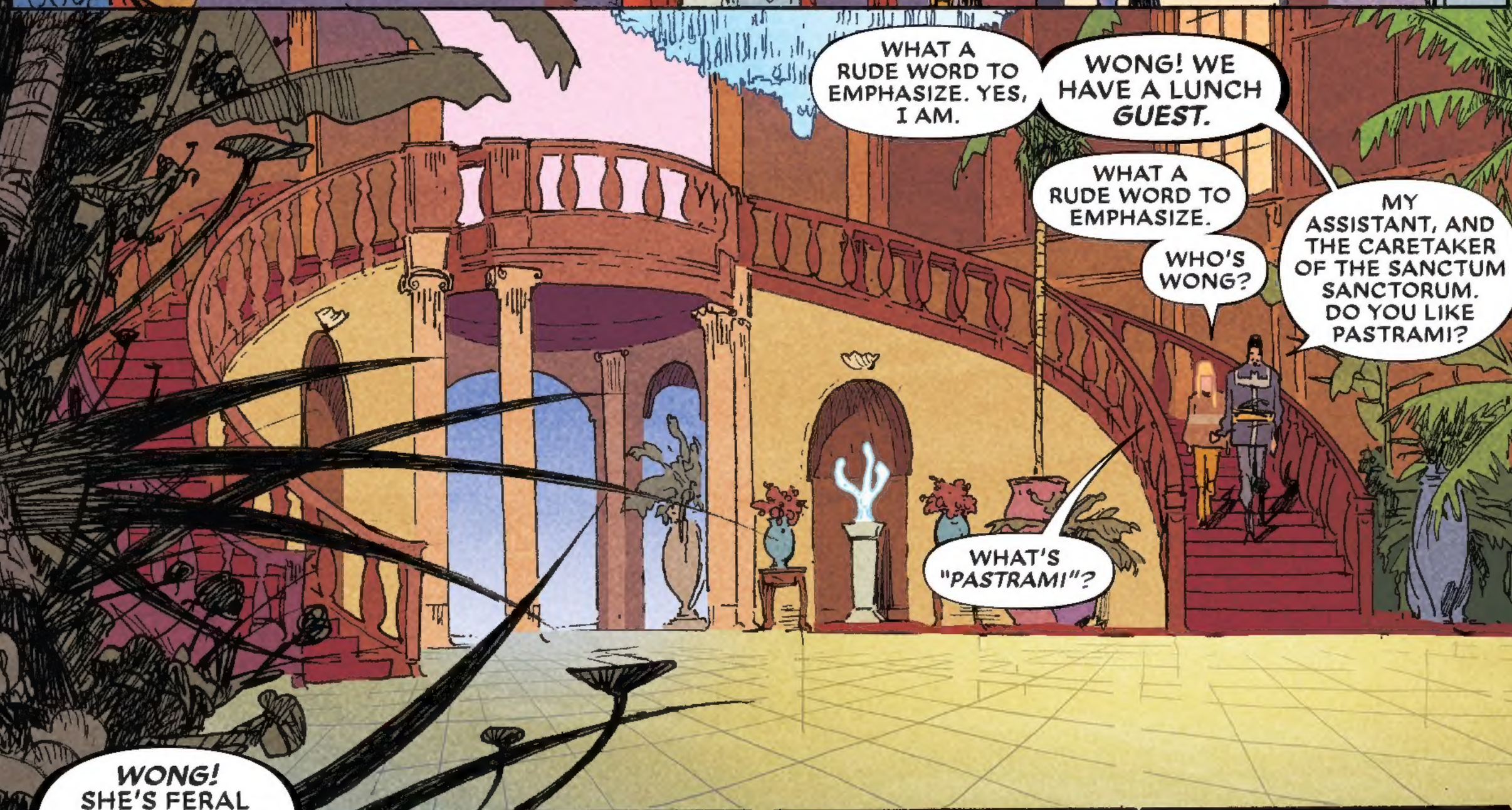

ALL RIGHT. I'LL ADMIT, I THOUGHT THE "MALNOURISHED CHILD" THING WAS JUST AN ACT.
A PREDATOR'S RUSE! LIKE AN ANGLERFISH GLINTING FROM THE DEEP TO ATTRACT PREY.
BUT THIS GIRL-BODY ACTUALLY HAS FAR LESS SORCERY WAFTING FROM THE VISAGE, SO NOW I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK.
NEITHER FORM YOU TAKE IS THE DISGUISE...
SO LET'S SEE WHY A TEEN GIRL HAS THE STINK OF HELL CLINGING TO HER, SHALL WE?
POSSESSION, PERHAPS? NO, NO. YOUR SOUL IS INTACT. COMPLETE.
AND YOUR AURA IS CLEAR AS WELL. CONGRATULATIONS! THAT DOESN'T ACTUALLY MEAN ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT, SO DON'T LET IT GO TO YOUR HEAD.
AH! I SEE THAT YOU'RE RUSSIAN. WELL.
HELLO, WHAT'S THIS...? THAT DOESN'T BELONG HERE...

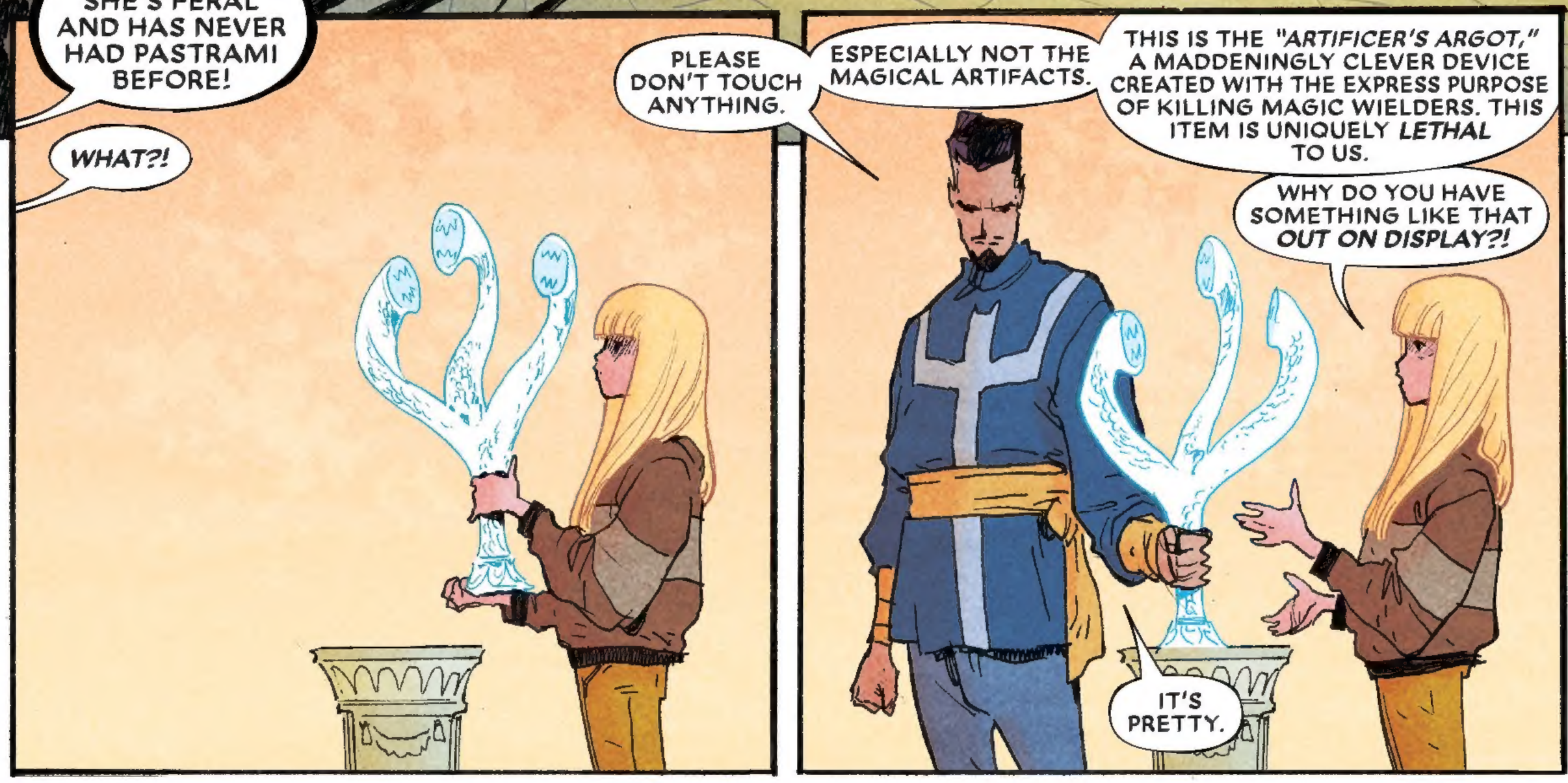
BY THE POWER OF THE VISHANTI, WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO YOU?!
OH, YOU WRETCHED THING... I AM SO SORRY.
WAIT!

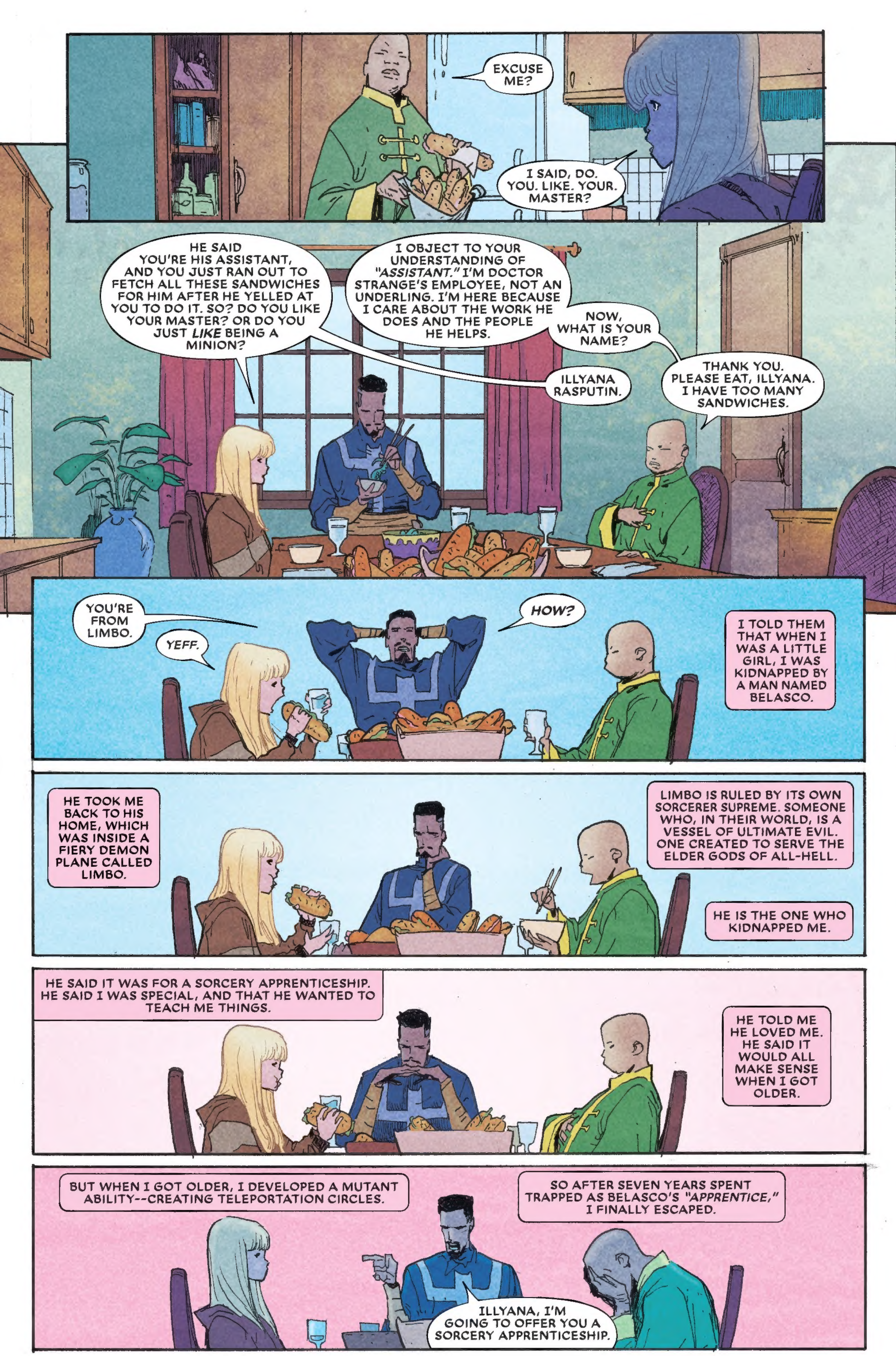

PLEASE, I MEAN YOU NO HAR--
I JUST WANT TO--
I'M A DOCT--
I DIDN'T TELEPORT HERE...
NO, I BROUGHT YOU HERE. YOU'RE A DANGER TO YOURSELF AND OTHERS IN YOUR CURRENT STATE. WOULD YOU--
STOP, I'M
ONLY TRYING
TO HELP,
YOU INFERNAL
BRAT!
YOU THINK YOU'RE THE FIRST SORCERER TO TRY TRAPPING ME IN HIS HOME?

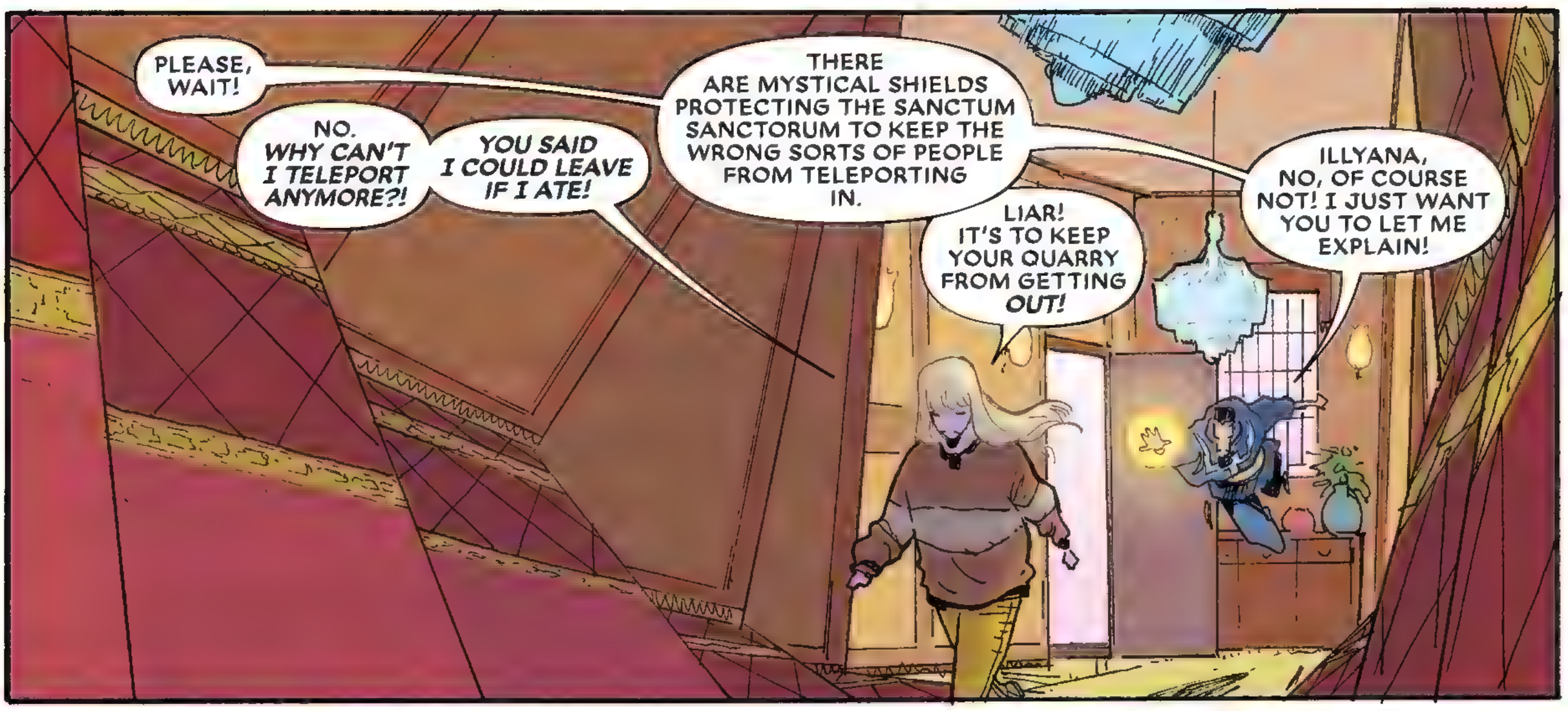
YOU'RE NOT.
STAY ÷HUFF÷ BACK...
...I'LL ÷PUFF÷ DESTROY YOU.
GROWL
YES, WELL. AT LEAST STAY FOR LUNCH FIRST. I'LL LET YOU LEAVE IF YOU LET ME FEED YOU.
YOU HAVE THAT PITIABLE "UNDERFED RUNAWAY" PALLOR TO YOU.

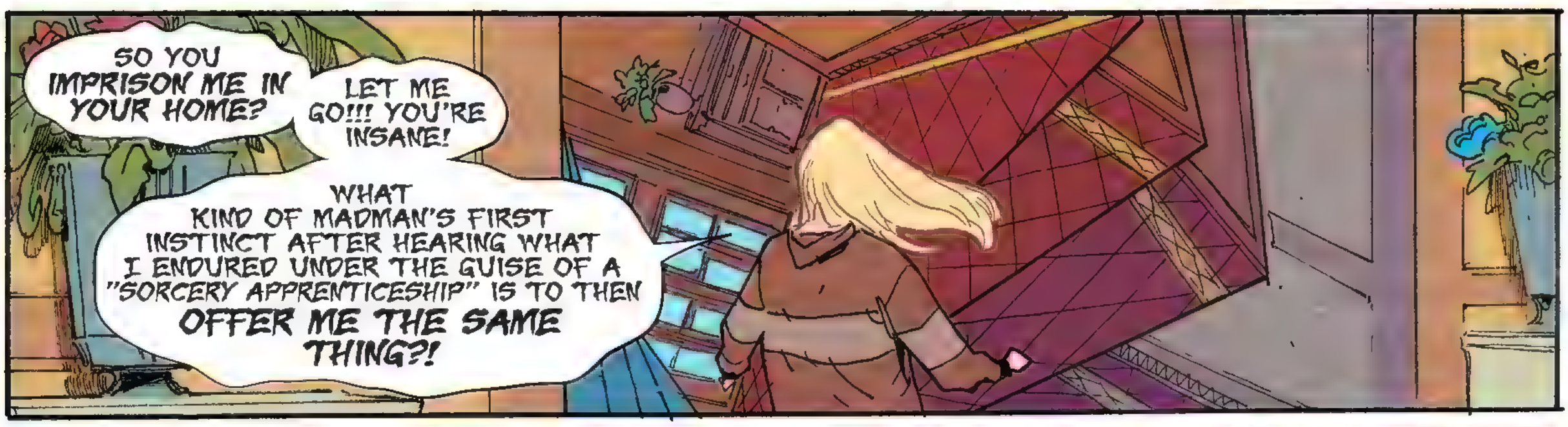

MY NAME IS DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE. THIS IS MY PRACTICE AND RESIDENCE, THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM! PLEASE DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING, ESPECIALLY NOT THE MAGICAL ARTIFACTS.
"STRANGE"?
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I HAD THAT NAME BEFORE I WAS THE SORCERER SUPREME OF THIS DIMENSION.
YOU'RE EARTH'S SORCERER SUPREME?

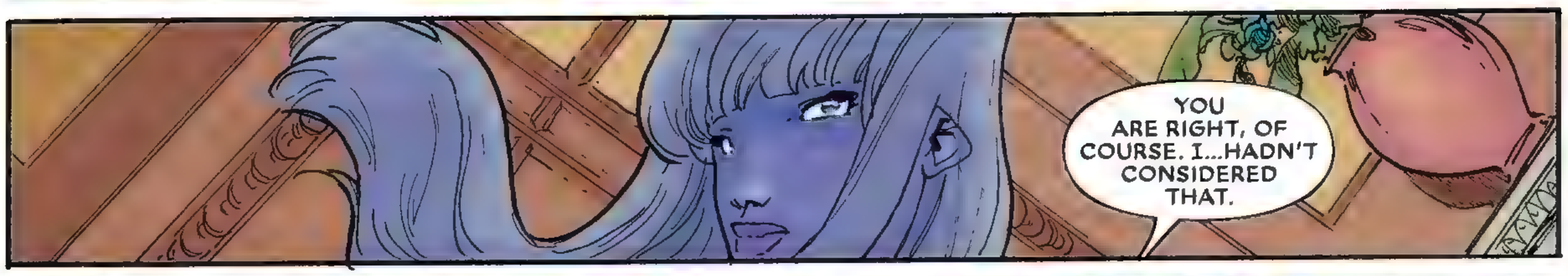

WHAT A RUDE WORD TO EMPHASIZE. YES, I AM.
WONG! WE HAVE A LUNCH GUEST.
WHAT A RUDE WORD TO EMPHASIZE.
WHO'S WONG?
MY ASSISTANT, AND THE CARETAKER OF THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM. DO YOU LIKE PASTRAMI?
WHAT'S "PASTRAMI"?

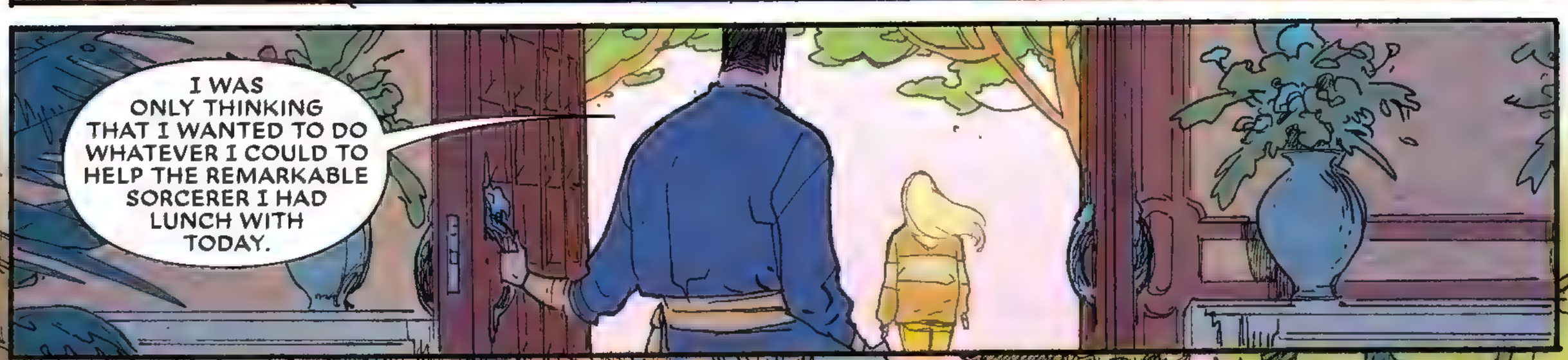

WONG! SHE'S FERAL AND HAS NEVER HAD PASTRAMI BEFORE!
WHAT?!
PLEASE DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING.
ESPECIALLY NOT THE MAGICAL ARTIFACTS.
THIS IS THE "ARTIFICER'S ARGOT," A MADDENINGLY CLEVER DEVICE CREATED WITH THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF KILLING MAGIC WIELDERS. THIS ITEM IS UNIQUELY LETHAL TO US.
WHY DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT OUT ON DISPLAY?!
IT'S PRETTY.


EXCUSE ME?
I SAID, DO. YOU. LIKE. YOUR. MASTER?
HE SAID YOU'RE HIS ASSISTANT, AND YOU JUST RAN OUT TO FETCH ALL THESE SANDWICHES FOR HIM AFTER HE YELLED AT YOU TO DO IT. SO? DO YOU LIKE YOUR MASTER? OR DO YOU JUST *LIKE* BEING A MINION?
I OBJECT TO YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF "*ASSISTANT.*" I'M DOCTOR STRANGE'S EMPLOYEE, NOT AN UNDERLING. I'M HERE BECAUSE I CARE ABOUT THE WORK HE DOES AND THE PEOPLE HE HELPS.
NOW, WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
ILLYANA RASPUTIN.
THANK YOU. PLEASE EAT, ILLYANA. I HAVE TOO MANY SANDWICHES.
YOU'RE FROM LIMBO.
YEFF.
HOW?
I TOLD THEM THAT WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, I WAS KIDNAPPED BY A MAN NAMED BELASCO.
HE TOOK ME BACK TO HIS HOME, WHICH WAS INSIDE A FIERY DEMON PLANE CALLED LIMBO.
LIMBO IS RULED BY ITS OWN SORCERER SUPREME. SOMEONE WHO, IN THEIR WORLD, IS A VESSEL OF ULTIMATE EVIL. ONE CREATED TO SERVE THE ELDER GODS OF ALL-HELL.
HE IS THE ONE WHO KIDNAPPED ME.
HE SAID IT WAS FOR A SORCERY APPRENTICESHIP. HE SAID I WAS SPECIAL, AND THAT HE WANTED TO TEACH ME THINGS.
HE TOLD ME HE LOVED ME. HE SAID IT WOULD ALL MAKE SENSE WHEN I GOT OLDER.
BUT WHEN I GOT OLDER, I DEVELOPED A MUTANT ABILITY--CREATING TELEPORTATION CIRCLES.
SO AFTER SEVEN YEARS SPENT TRAPPED AS BELASCO'S "*APPRENTICE,*" I FINALLY ESCAPED.
ILLYANA, I'M GOING TO OFFER YOU A SORCERY APPRENTICESHIP.


PLEASE, WAIT!
NO. WHY CAN'T I TELEPORT ANYMORE?!
YOU SAID I COULD LEAVE IF I ATE!
THERE ARE MYSTICAL SHIELDS PROTECTING THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM TO KEEP THE WRONG SORTS OF PEOPLE FROM TELEPORTING IN.
LIAR! IT'S TO KEEP YOUR QUARRY FROM GETTING OUT!
ILLYANA, NO, OF COURSE NOT! I JUST WANT YOU TO LET ME EXPLAIN!


SO YOU IMPRISON ME IN YOUR HOME?
LET ME GO!!! YOU'RE INSANE!
WHAT KIND OF MADMAN'S FIRST INSTINCT AFTER HEARING WHAT I ENDURED UNDER THE GUISE OF A "SORCERY APPRENTICESHIP" IS TO THEN OFFER ME THE SAME THING?!


YOU ARE RIGHT, OF COURSE. I...HADN'T CONSIDERED THAT.


I WAS ONLY THINKING THAT I WANTED TO DO WHATEVER I COULD TO HELP THE REMARKABLE SORCERER I HAD LUNCH WITH TODAY.

I...WAS THINKING THAT, AT THE VERY LEAST, I COULD OFFER THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM AS A SAFE PLACE TO STAY WHILE SHE GETS BACK ON HER FEET AGAIN.
THE CHOICE OF WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEPT EITHER OR NEITHER OF THESE THINGS IS ENTIRELY YOURS, ILLYANA.
I ACCEPTED BOTH.

NOW DON'T LET IT GO TO YOUR HEAD, BUT YOU'RE ACTUALLY ONE OF THE STRONGEST SORCERERS I'VE EVER MET.
THE SIGNAL AND STRENGTH OF YOUR MAGIC WAS LIKE AN AURIC EARTHQUAKE AS YOU WERE TRAVELING DOWN THE EASTERN SEABOARD. ANY MAGIC-MINDED INHABITANT IN THE AREA COULD FEEL YOU COMING FROM MILES AWAY.
IT MADE THEM *VERY NERVOUS.*
AND WITH GOOD REASON! YOU'VE GOT SAVAGE BLACK MAGIC GROWING WILD INSIDE YOU! (IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, BUT) YOU WILL HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO PROPERLY CHANNEL THAT BEFORE IT BECOMES DESTRUCTIVE.
WE CAN NEVER ELIMINATE IT FROM YOUR SOUL, BUT SINCE YOU'VE BEEN FORCED TO PLAY HOST TO BLACK MAGIC, WE'LL AT LEAST MAKE IT EARN ITS @#$%&@# KEEP FOR YOU.
WE'LL PROCEED AS YOU BECOME COMFORTABLE WIELDING YOUR MAGIC IN NEW, HEALTHIER WAYS, BUT FOR NOW LET'S GET YOU ACQUAINTED WITH THE BASICS. STARTING WITH *CREATION MAGIC!*
CONJURING SOMETHING FROM NOTHING; AN OBJECT THAT IS THE PUREST EXTENSION OF A SORCERER'S SOUL. IT COMES NATURALLY TO MOST OF US. TRY MAKING SOMETHING!
I *AM* TRYING.
...ALL RIGHT! WELL. WE'LL CIRCLE BACK TO THAT. DON'T WORRY, IT'S JUST YOUR FIRST TRY.
THE MORE I LEARNED, THE MORE FRIGHTENED I BECAME OF HOW LITTLE I ONCE KNEW.
MEDITATION.
THIS WORLD'S HISTORY.
NONLETHAL HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT.
MY HISTORY.
CREATION MAGIC.
ASTRAL PROJECTION.
A MASTERY OF ONE AREA LED TO THE MASTERY OF THE NEXT ONE.
BASIC DEFENSIVE ENCHANTMENTS.
CREATION MAGIC.
INCANTATIONS.
PROTECTIVE AMULETS.
INTERMEDIATE DEFENSIVE ENCHANTMENTS.
BEGINNER OFFENSIVE SPELLS.
CREATION MAGIC.
MONTHS PASSED.

UGH! I'M SO SICK OF THIS! I CAN'T DO CREATION MAGIC! I JUST CAN'T.

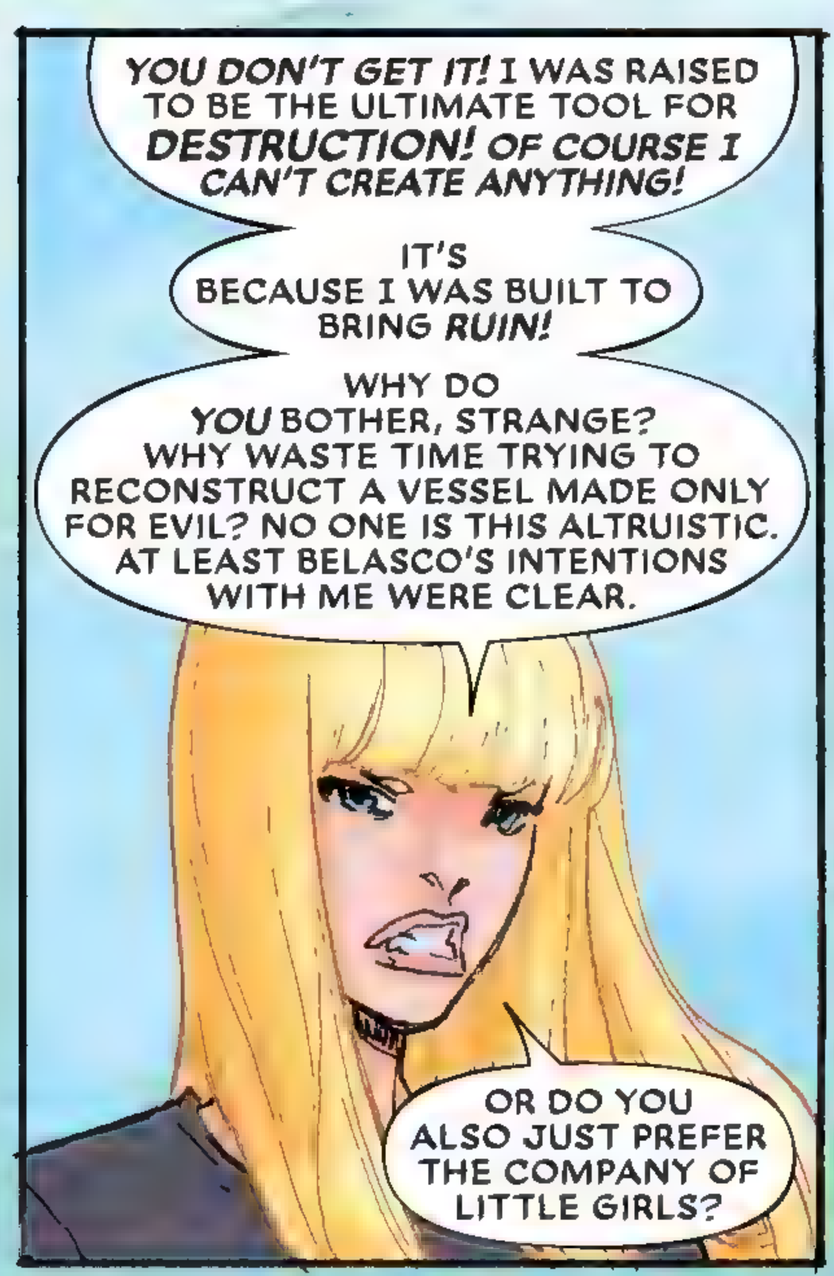
ILLYANA, TAKE A DEEP BREATH, AND THEN WE'LL TRY AGAIN.

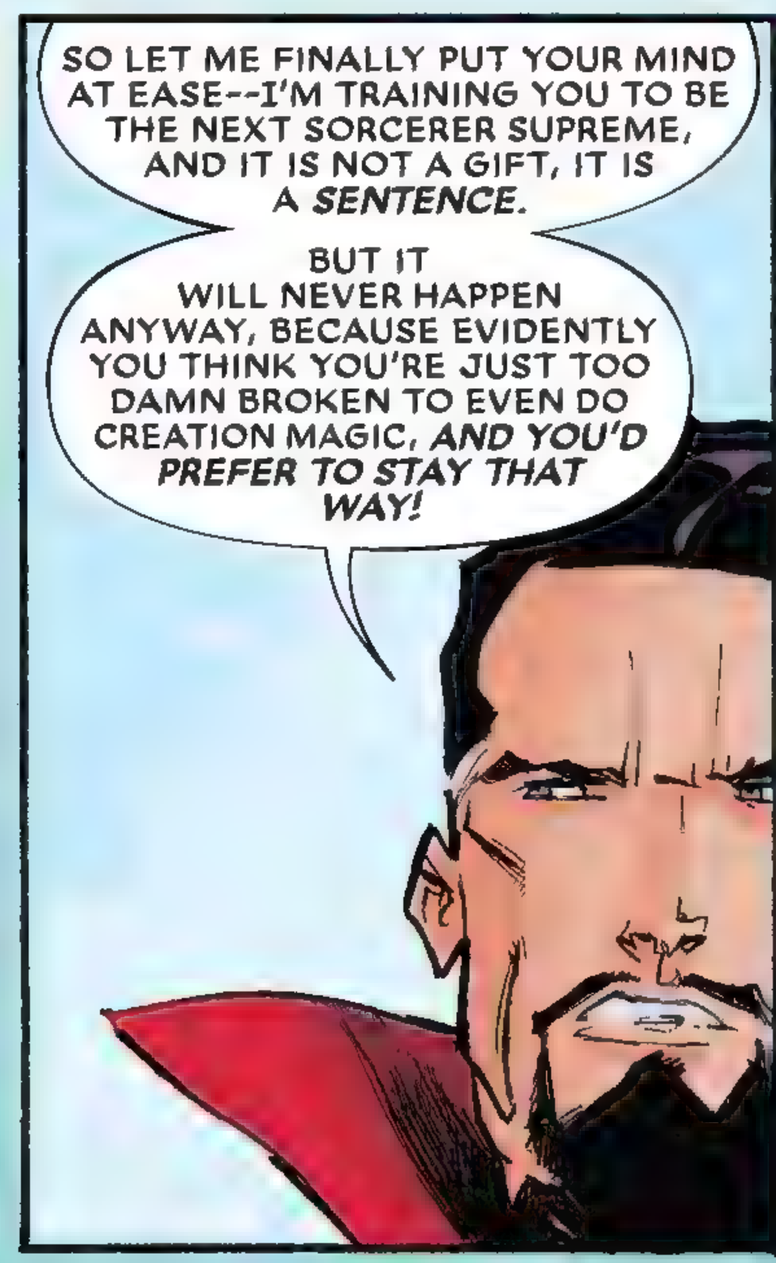
IN ALL OTHER AREAS YOU'VE PROGRESSED AT A PACE INDICATING THE POSSIBILITY OF ONE DAY BECOMING THE MOST POWERFUL SORCERER ON THE PLANET. THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO REASON YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO CREATION MAGIC.

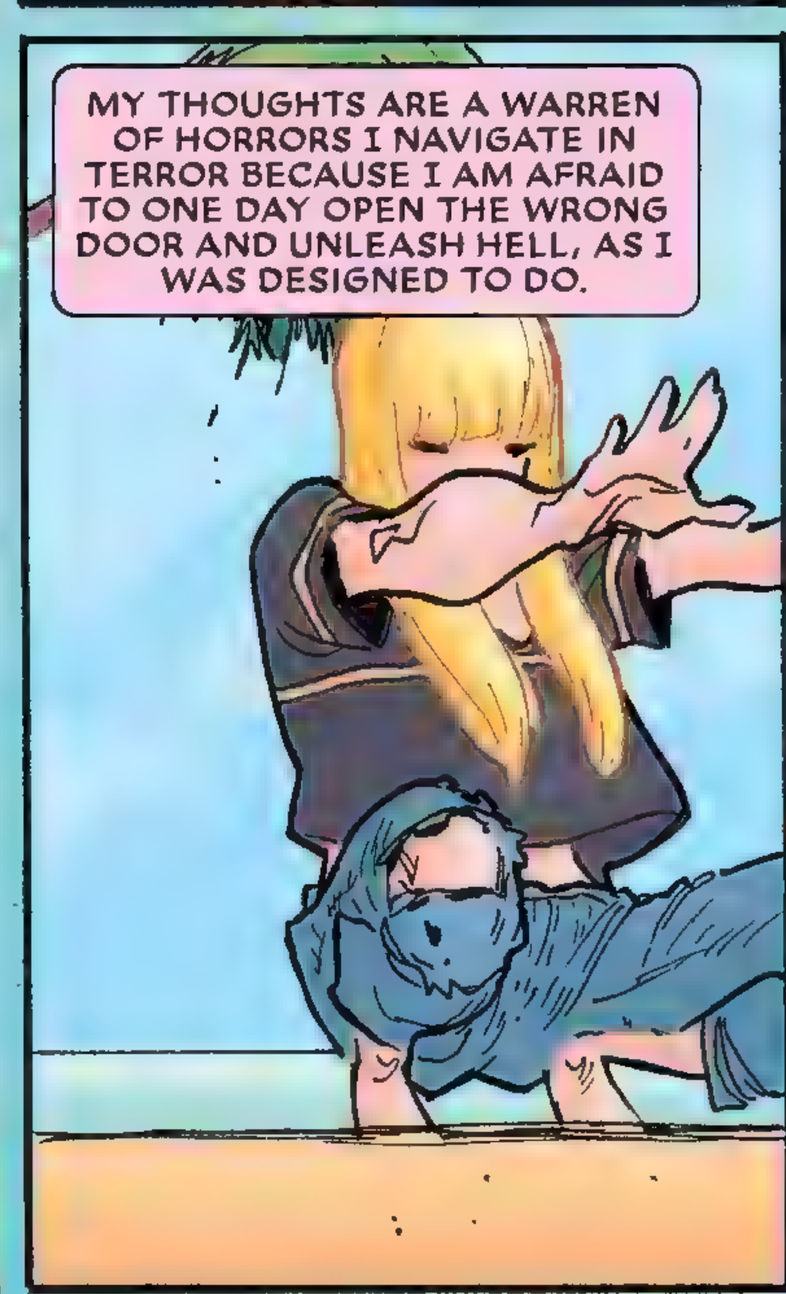
MAYBE A CHANGE OF LOCATION? I THOUGHT FINALLY PRACTICING OUTSIDE THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM MIGHT INSPIRE YOU, BUT PERHAPS YOUR COLDER HOMELAND WOULD BE BETTER...

THINK, ILLYANA--DID YOU PERHAPS HAVE A FAVORITE TOY GROWING UP? RIGHT, NO, SORRY--A FAVORITE ROCK, THEN? DAGGER?

ERM... ENTRAIL?







ILLYANA.

÷SNIFFLE÷

AND THEN, AFTER MONTHS OF FAILURE--A CREATURE OF RUIN FINALLY *CREATED* SOMETHING.

THE SOUL STAFF.

THE PUREST EXPRESSION OF MY POWER AS A SORCERER. A TANGIBLE EXTENSION OF MY SOUL.

I HAD GENUINELY BELIEVED I WOULD NEVER BE CAPABLE OF CREATING A THING OF SUCH BEAUTY.

BECAUSE, FOR MANY YEARS, A MAN NAMED BELASCO TRIED TO BURY ME.

HE WANTED TO MAKE ME DISAPPEAR BY PUSHING ME DEEPER INTO MY OWN SUFFERING.

HI, SWEETIE. I MISSED YOU.

I NEVER SAID HE LET ME GO.

LITTLE ILLYANA. I'VE BEEN LOOKING *EVERYWHERE* FOR YOU! SHAME ON YOU, MAKING ME WORRY LIKE THAT.

NO ONE KNOWS YOU LIKE I DO, ILLYANA. I LOVE YOU SO MUCH.

I HAVE BEEN SCRYING FOR THE SCENT OF YOUR SORCERY ACROSS THE UNIVERSE FOR THE PAST YEAR.

BUT TODAY I FINALLY FIND YOU, AND YOU'RE WITH ANOTHER SORCER--?!

YES, THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT, THANK YOU!

I ONLY LET YOU SPEAK SO LONG BECAUSE I WANTED TO KNOW HOW YOU FOUND HER, BUT IT SEEMS YOU JUST PLAIN LUCKED INTO IT!

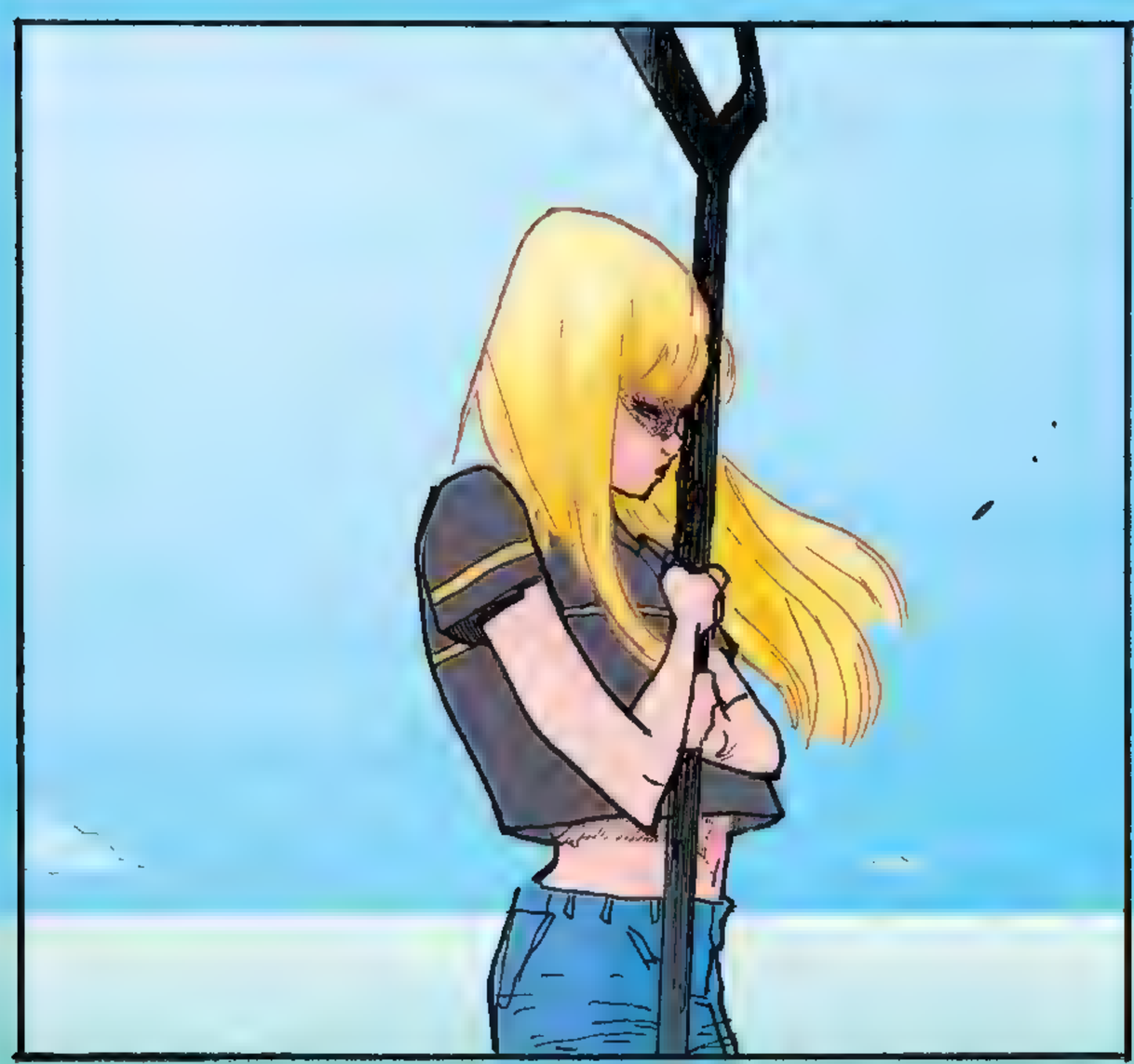
CONGRATULATIONS.

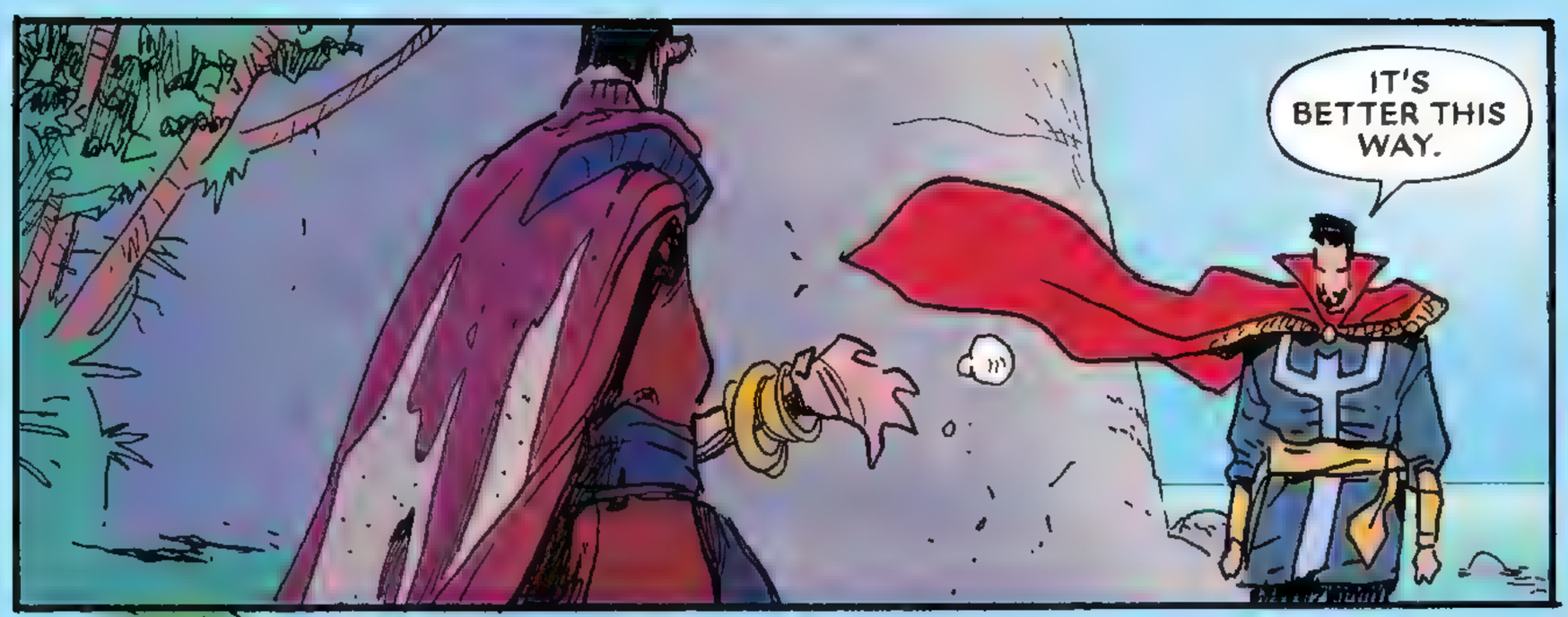
YOU, DESPITE ALL THE POWER IMBUED BY YOUR INCOMPETENT GODS, WERE ONLY ABLE TO FIND ILLYANA BECAUSE YOU CAUGHT US ON THE *ONE DAY* WE PRACTICED CREATION MAGIC OUTSIDE THE MYSTICAL PROTECTIONS OF OUR HOME.

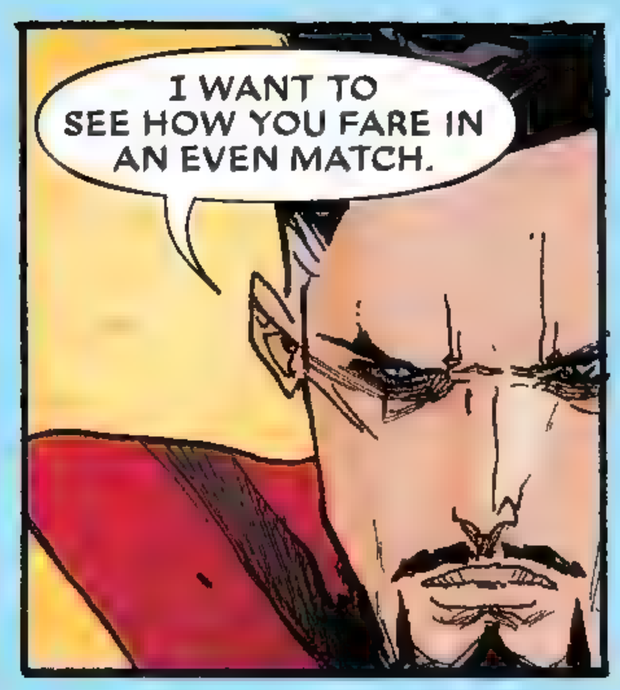
CREATION MAGIC HAS AN ADDITIVE EFFECT ON ANY MYSTICAL ATMOSPHERE, ILLYANA, BUT YOURS IS PARTICULARLY POTENT! YOU--IT--IT'S *EXTRAORDINARY!* GOOD *WORK*, COMRADE!

WHAT DO YOU SAY WE SHOW YOUR FORMER TUTOR ALL THE FANCY NEW OFFENSIVE MAGIC YOU'VE MASTERED BEFORE WE HEAD HOME?

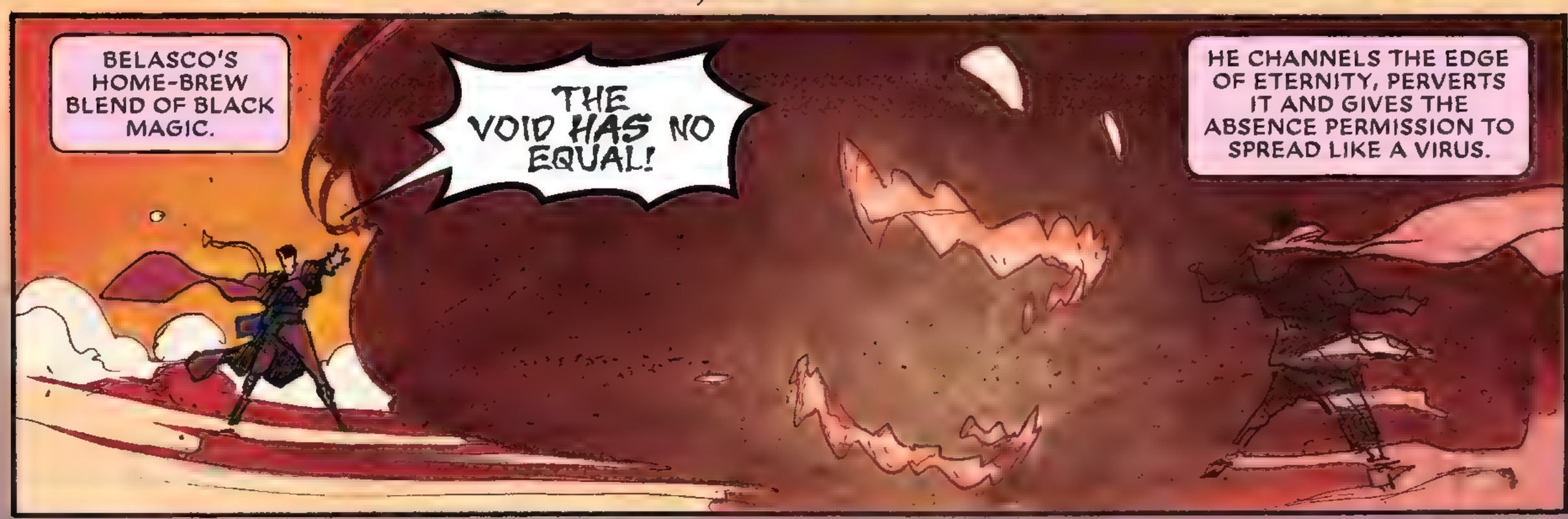
ILLYANA?

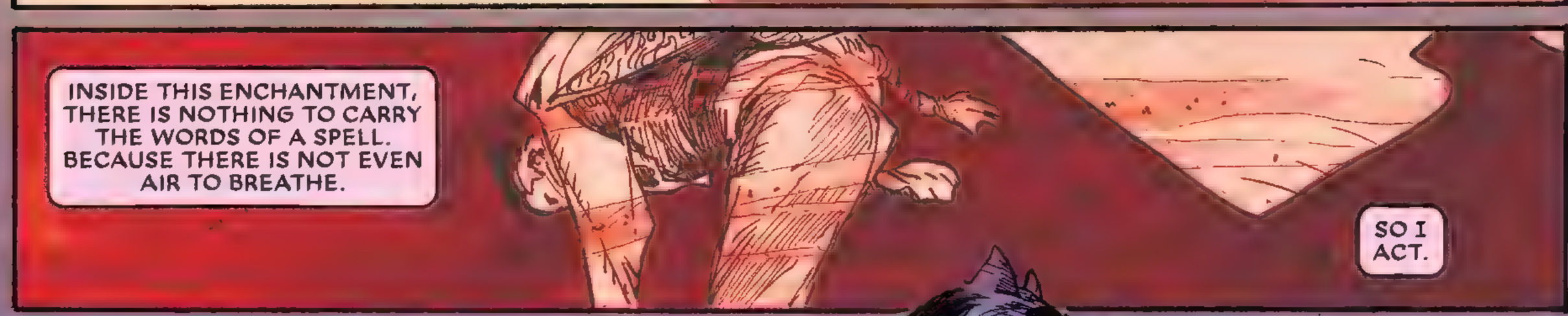






JULANI'S SPELL OF ENERGY MANIPULATION. FROM THE SCROLLS OF AGAMOTTO.



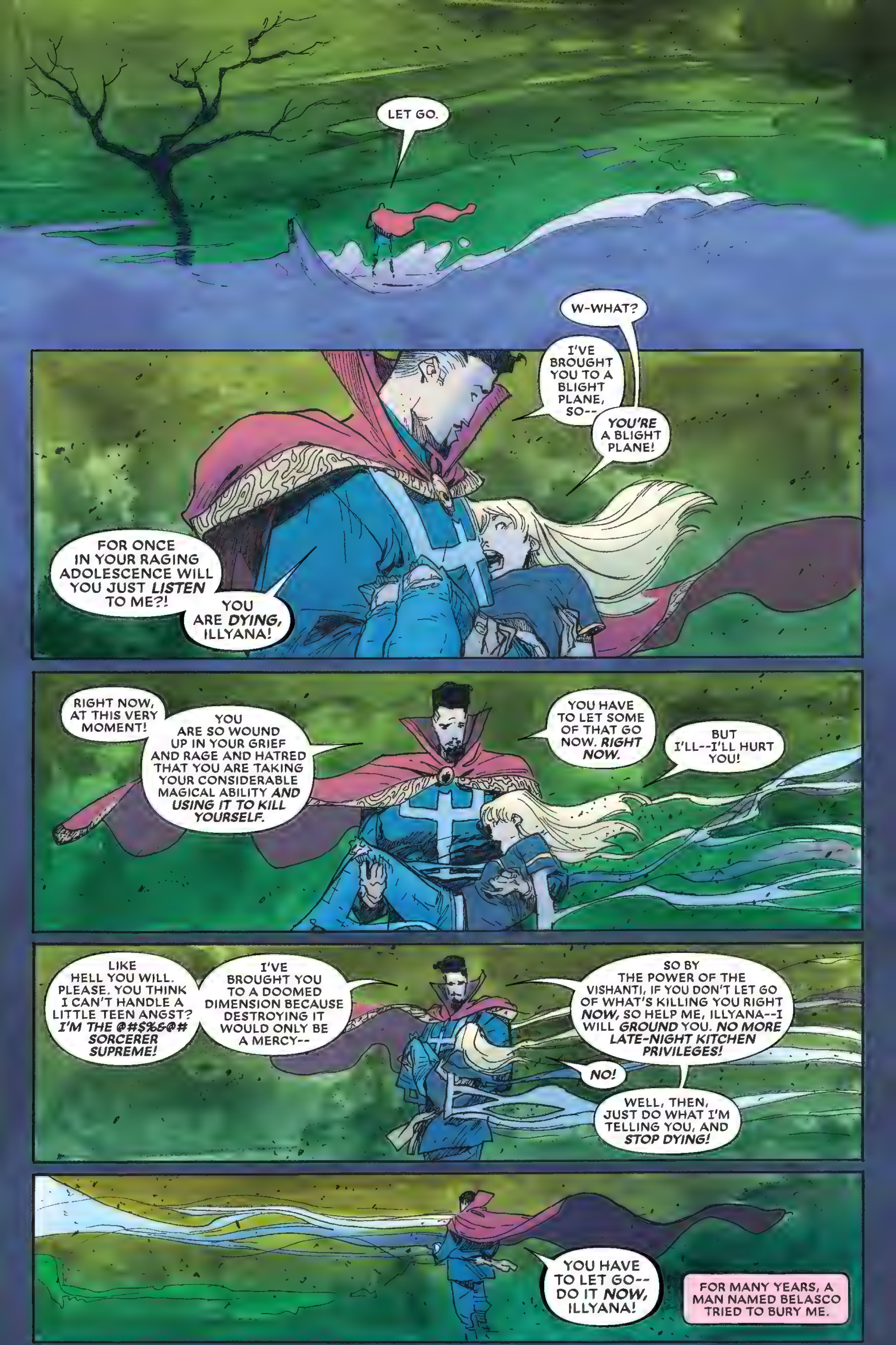


ONE UNIQUELY LETHAL TO SORCERERS.

NO
NO
NO
NO
PLEASE, NO
NO

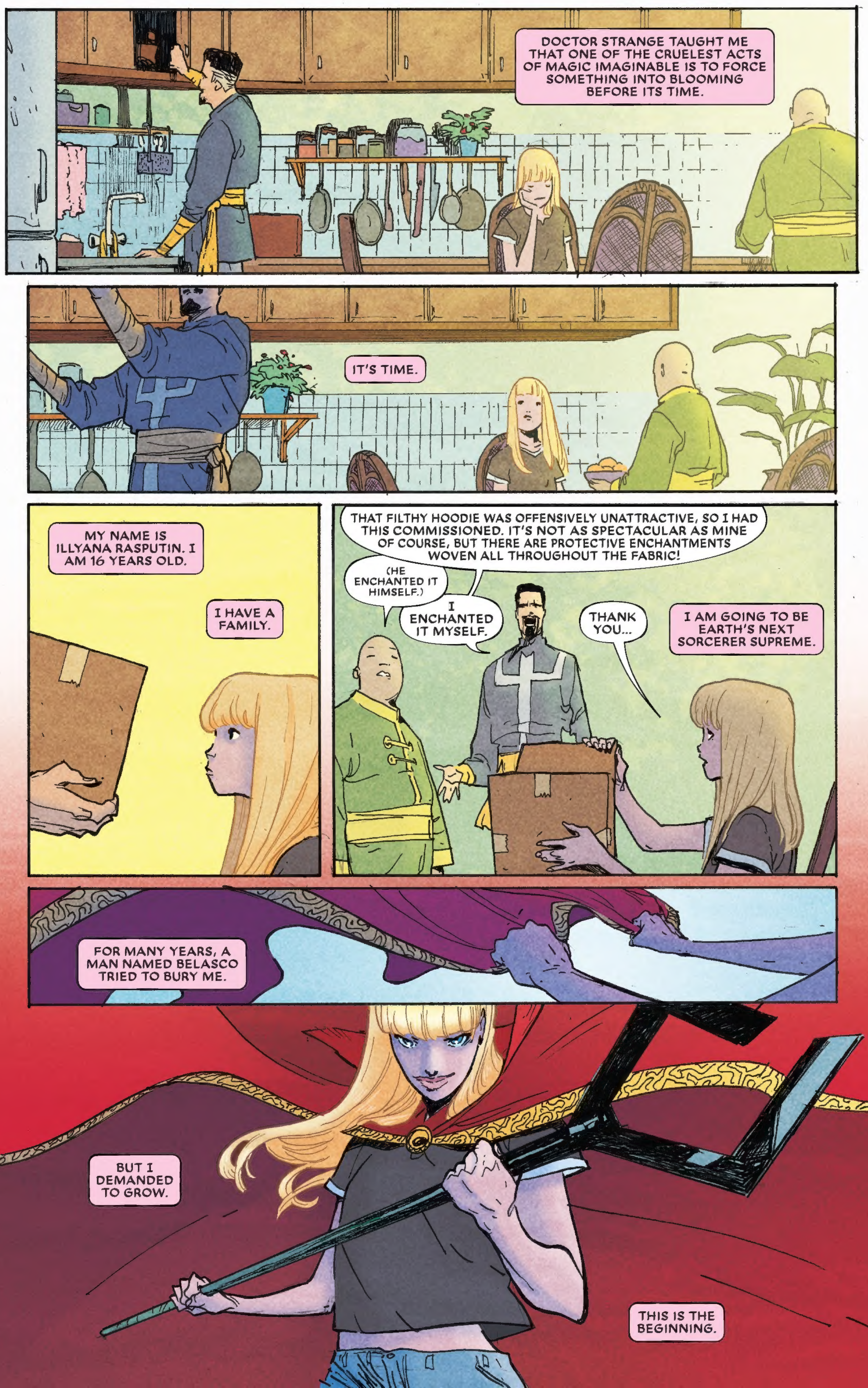
I THOUGHT I HAD FINALLY--
-GASP-

I JUST WANTED TO BE GOOD.


LET GO.
W-WHAT?
I'VE BROUGHT YOU TO A BLIGHT PLANE, SO--
YOU'RE A BLIGHT PLANE!
FOR ONCE IN YOUR RAGING ADOLESCENCE WILL YOU JUST LISTEN TO ME?!
YOU ARE DYING, ILLYANA!
RIGHT NOW, AT THIS VERY MOMENT!
YOU ARE SO WOUND UP IN YOUR GRIEF AND RAGE AND HATRED THAT YOU ARE TAKING YOUR CONSIDERABLE MAGICAL ABILITY AND USING IT TO KILL YOURSELF.
YOU HAVE TO LET SOME OF THAT GO NOW. RIGHT NOW.
BUT I'LL--I'LL HURT YOU!
LIKE HELL YOU WILL. PLEASE. YOU THINK I CAN'T HANDLE A LITTLE TEEN ANGST? I'M THE @#$%&@# SORCERER SUPREME!
I'VE BROUGHT YOU TO A DOOMED DIMENSION BECAUSE DESTROYING IT WOULD ONLY BE A MERCY--
SO BY THE POWER OF THE VISHANTI, IF YOU DON'T LET GO OF WHAT'S KILLING YOU RIGHT NOW, SO HELP ME, ILLYANA--I WILL GROUND YOU. NO MORE LATE-NIGHT KITCHEN PRIVILEGES!
NO!
WELL, THEN, JUST DO WHAT I'M TELLING YOU, AND STOP DYING!
YOU HAVE TO LET GO-- DO IT NOW, ILLYANA!
FOR MANY YEARS, A MAN NAMED BELASCO TRIED TO BURY ME.

LITTLE DID HE KNOW, HE WAS ONLY PLANTING A SEED.

ONE INTENT ON GROWING.
WHAT... WHAT NOW?
LUNCH, I BELIEVE.


DOCTOR STRANGE TAUGHT ME THAT ONE OF THE CRUELEST ACTS OF MAGIC IMAGINABLE IS TO FORCE SOMETHING INTO BLOOMING BEFORE ITS TIME.
IT'S TIME.
MY NAME IS ILLYANA RASPUTIN. I AM 16 YEARS OLD.
I HAVE A FAMILY.
THAT FILTHY HOODIE WAS OFFENSIVELY UNATTRACTIVE, SO I HAD THIS COMMISSIONED. IT'S NOT AS SPECTACULAR AS MINE OF COURSE, BUT THERE ARE PROTECTIVE ENCHANTMENTS WOVEN ALL THROUGHOUT THE FABRIC!
(HE ENCHANTED IT HIMSELF.)
I ENCHANTED IT MYSELF.
THANK YOU...
I AM GOING TO BE EARTH'S NEXT SORCERER SUPREME.
FOR MANY YEARS, A MAN NAMED BELASCO TRIED TO BURY ME.
BUT I DEMANDED TO GROW.
THIS IS THE BEGINNING.

ZONE